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Postal Regulatory Commission
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Attn: Commissioner

Re: Docket #2012-26

The "enhanced" post office box services, rolled out nationwide earlier this year, offers Post Office Box renters several new options:

- The ability to receive packages from private carriers.
- The use of the Post Office street address for Post Office Box addressing.
- Removing the PO Box designation when using a street address.
- Offering email notification of mail delivery.
- Offering the use of the "#" designation in lieu of a "P.O. Box" designation.

USPS customers will also be able submit a change of address and have their mail forwarded at no additional charge after closing the box, a service currently denied to Private Mail Box providers under CMRA regulations.

The USPS UNFAIRLY competes with The UPS Store and all other pack and ship stores that are CMRA's.

They don't have to pay property taxes, or collect sales taxes, and because they set the rules for both them and us, they're giving themselves more favorable rules, such as free mail forwarding and changes of address, while charging us if we want to provide those services to their customers.

But even if they didn't have an unfair advantage, is it good public policy to have the government competing against its own citizens? Providing services that the private sector cannot provide at a reasonable price, especially those that benefit not just those directly served, but society as a whole indirectly is certainly something they should do. But the private sector can, and does provide reasonably priced PMB's. Society doesn't benefit by the Post Office just under-cutting the price charged by the private sector. It's not like they're providing free mailboxes to those who can't afford it. They're competitively pricing their product, so there is no societal benefit.

A grocery store doesn't complain about a publicly funded food bank that might open right next door, but if the government opened a grocery store next door, offering the same products at just a slightly lower price, that would be a problem. The food bank serves a societal need, but there is no societal need for the government to get into the grocery store business, and compete with private grocers who have to pay property taxes, and follow other local rules that the feds would be exempt from.

They wouldn't want to compete with us if the playing field was level.

The USPS is killing our businesses. They will eventually put our employees on the unemployment line to do something that isn't going to solve their underlying problems. It is just poor public policy that will negatively affect their already deteriorating public image.

The post office is required to announce all new services they plan to offer, provide cost/benefit analysis, and allow the public to comment on them prior to their acceptance by the regulatory commission. In this case they deliberately did not file these new services announcements, intending instead to "assume" they were covered under a different announcement, thus allowing them to have them approved surreptitiously. Indeed, it was only upon discovery that the post office had already begun offering these services that organizations like AMPC put together a coalition to challenge the changes.

I hope the post office does the right thing and pursues other tangible methods of reducing their deficit. Please not at our expense.

Regards,

Joseph Gall
Franchise Owner